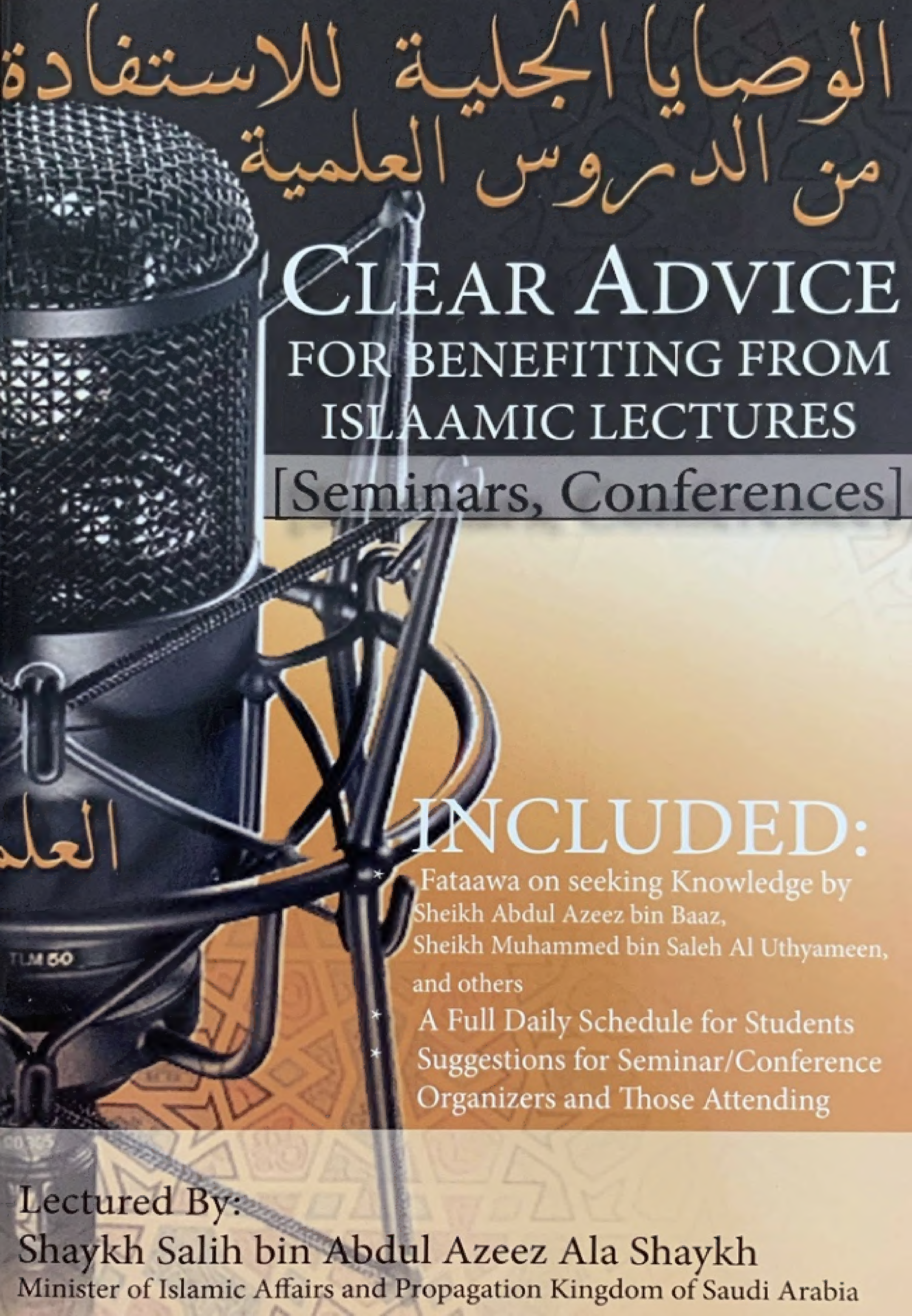


الوصايا الجلية للاستفادة
من الدروس العلمية
CLEAR ADVICE
FOR BENEFITING FROM
ISLAAMIC LECTURES
[Seminars, Conferences]
INCLUDED:
Fataawa on seeking Knowledge by
Sheikh Abdul Azeez bin Baaz,
Sheikh Muhammed bin Saleh Al Uthyameen,
and others
A Full Daily Schedule for Students
Suggestions for Seminar/Conference
Organizers and Those Attending
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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

In an effort to assist my Muslim brothers and sisters in their quest to seek knowledge, I felt the great need to present to the English speaking community this valuable work. It directs essential advice toward:

1. Seminar and Conference organizers
2. Those attending the lectures and students
3. Scholars and Teachers participating in the lectures

And many more,

One should keep in mind that the origin of this treatise is an audio lecture transcribed into book form. With that being the case, it is very complicated for the written translation to have a compositional flow as a book would. I apologize for any mistakes made due to the above mentioned reason.

Abu Ismaa'eel Mustafa George
Jamada El Oula. 19, 28/June 4, 2007

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allah; The Lord of the worlds. He gives success to whom He wills to follow the path that pleases Him, He also teaches and cultivates who He chooses. All praise is due to Him for the enormous blessings He bestowed upon us and the numerous bounties granted to us. To Him is much praise just as He has blessed much, and to Him is much gratitude just as He (سبحانه و تعالى) has blessed (the creation) day and night. I praise Him, thank Him, and exalt Him with all good.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, He is alone and has no partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. May abundant peace of Allah be upon him, his family members and his companions.

I ask Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) to utilize me and you in that which He loves and is pleased with, and I ask that He makes easy for us the paths of good, and that He closes for us the paths of evil. Verily He –The Glorified- is generous and gracious.

For what proceeds, I, at the commencing of these Islamic lessons which are the sixth seminar in Masjid Sheikh Al Islam Ibn Taymiyah in the district of Sultana in the city of Riyadh, it is incumbent upon me to turn to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) with supplication for the individuals responsible for organizing these seminars and lessons.

I ask Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) to grant them good and increase them in support of the truth and propagating it, and I ask that He increases them in opening doors of good and nearness to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) through various means of good. This (supplication) is from the rights that are obligatory to recognize.

These lessons are established yearly, and they comprise of lessons in various fields of knowledge and subjects. The length of the seminar is three weeks, wherein 18 lessons will be given on different topics, and by the permission of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) much knowledge will be obtained in this short period of time.

Some brothers have decided that this lecture be titled: **'Al Wasaya Al Jaliyah lil Istifadah min Ad Duroos Al 'Elmiyah'** (Clear Advice for Benefiting from Islamic Lessons).

Based on my limited experience with previous seminars, and my knowledge of what seminars have delivered of results I say, it is compulsory that every seminar or class possess pillars they are built on, those pillars are four:

1- Appropriate planning and organization prior to the classes (or seminar).
2- The presence of a teacher (Scholar).
3- The attendance of diligent devoted learners.
4- Appropriate location, i.e. a location suitable for the attendance of a large number of people within a short period of time.

THE FIRST PILLAR

Appropriate Organization

There is no doubt that the greatest benefit derived from these lessons is accomplished through good planning and early preparation. Because of this, benefit is obtained from these seminars or lessons.

Preparation involves: Organizing a suitable setting for these lessons.

The organizers, they are:

- The Imam of the Masjid
- Or brothers working within the administration of the Masjid, or in a center for propagation

It is incumbent upon the organizer to look at the needs of the students of knowledge, and the needs of the youth that are attending the lessons. These needs differ according to location and time, and according to the teachers and materials that are being studied. Therefore, it is upon the organizers to consider the place in which the seminar is being held; which is the country, as well as the Masjid, and the time. Indeed winter seminars differ from summer ones in terms of organization and timings. It is not befitting to hold every seminar or class in the Masjid, reason being, large numbers of students that desire to benefit will attend. Due to this, the appropriate location must to be sought, as well as good air-conditioning, along with easy entrances and exits, etc.

Thus, it is mandatory to consider the location and timing.

It is also befitting that the seminar is organized and planned far in advance. Planning with the scholars must be done 6, 5, or 4 months in advance, in order for them (scholars) to prepare themselves. It took place in the past that some brothers intended to organize classes and seminars, they tried to convince some scholars to participate just 2 or 3 weeks, or a month before the lectures. Due to such short notice, they (scholars) did not agree as they were already committed to other matters that prevented them from participating. This is the case specifically during vacations when seminars are numerous.

Therefore, selection should be done well in advance in order to plan with all participants, and in order to choose the scholars, people of knowledge, and teachers that will participate.

Another matter which is very important in organizing a seminar is that the organizers should plan with the assistance of those who have preceded them in establishing seminars and those who understand what is needed to do so. For example, in choosing a new country to establish a seminar in, whether this is within The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or outside, it is befitting for the organizers to consult those who have previously established successful seminars and classes. This is because, from the character of the believer is to consult, and the one who does so will not be disappointed. Several seminars failed due to lack of experience and lack

of consulting. Indeed planning a seminar is not merely done on paper, if this were to take place, then once the people, time and place materialize, some discrepancy will occur. Consequently, it is mandatory that importance is shown to previous successful seminars, and how were they successful.

What is important in the seminar is that the organizers focus on benefiting the students. It is well known that some teachers are fit for lectures, but may not be suitable for teaching, while others are suitable for teaching, but are not fitting for teaching intensive courses during seminars. From them are those who can not properly deliver the knowledge that he possesses in a short period of time. [1]

Thus, the organizers must focus on:

1. The location and its preparation
2. The time
3. The teacher [1]
4. The field of knowledge and subjects
5. The books and texts

All of these matters acquire special attention and not every individual is able to manage them.

From the good of the brothers involved in the organization of this seminar in Masjid Shaykh Al Islam Ibn Tamiyyah, and at the forefront of them Fahd Al Garab –may Allah give him good, and other than him, <u>they consult with the people of knowledge in selecting the</u>

[1] Further discussion on the characteristics of the teacher will be mentioned in the second pillar.

subjects, topics, and texts. Verily the people of knowledge have understanding of what is suitable and what isn't. They obtain this experience through past seminars. For example, a particular text may not be suitable because it is divided in structure, weak in order, or because it does not contain all of what is needed in that topic, and similar reasons.

For that reason, planning with someone who has knowledge of seminar organization is extremely important.

THE SECOND PILLAR

This Refers to the Scholar who will Deliver the Lessons

Indeed scholars vary with regard to their preparation and abilities. This is because Allah granted people abilities, and He possibly granted a later person, what He did not grant the previous individual. He may also grant someone young, what the elder person did not accomplish. It is likewise possible that the younger individual is nearer to the youth as it relates to delivering lessons.

It is also possible that a teacher is able to successfully teach in a small period of time, a text that would normally take a year being taught weekly. If this text were to be taught in one week, perhaps the teacher that could normally finish it in a year would not be able to finish the text. He would only be able to explain 3 or 4 pages, and then the remaining ¾ of the book is left without explanation. Due to this, it is recommended that the teacher divides the text into portions (based on the duration of the seminar).

It has taken place in previous seminars in this Masjid, or other than this Masjid, that the knowledge of the scholar was greater than the time allocated for the seminar. The scholar would expound greatly in his explanation with great benefits, and as a result time became strained and the students were left without completing the work.

When this takes place the greatest benefit is lost for those attending the seminar, and at times their (those attending) numbers reach in the hundreds, and those benefiting from the recorded lessons (audio) possibly reach in the hundreds of thousands. I was informed by some brothers who are callers to Islam and who have visited some African or European countries, that they have found recorded audio tapes of seminars held in this Masjid or other than this Masjid, but those listening to the recordings are able to benefit from the complete explanation of the work.

Therefore, it is befitting for the teacher to organize his time and not to expound (lengthen) on one subject and in doing so not complete except a page or two of the text. Due to this, it is incumbent upon those organizing the seminar to remind the scholar if they notice him expounding during the beginning of the seminar after one or two lessons have passed. It is mandatory that time is preserved and focused on, and the explanation should be within accordance to the allocated short time.

Hence, choosing a teacher is extremely important, because from amongst them are those who are good at delivering a lesson, but with long preparation. Sometimes a teacher needs preparation, and other times it's possible that lesson preparation is a reason for the lengthening of time in delivering the lesson and topic. The teacher (in this case) comes to convey the lesson, but the materials and information are so abundant that he delivers it in an inappropriate manner. The student does not need all of this information, because getting a general

understanding of the full text is of greater importance. Further explanations and several narrations mentioned from various books are not suitable for intensive courses. Rather, the teacher while participating in seminars should focus on giving the text and explaining the phrases within it, informing of what is meant by the author while mentioning the proofs quickly without any deficiency being present. This requires practice and grounded knowledge in every subject and little preparation. It is also upon the teacher to follow the methodology of ease in presenting information and delivering points of benefit. A student will not continue if he does not find knowledgeable points of benefit.

It is also required that the teacher be well grounded in the subject being taught. His knowledge should be tolerable and his language should be easy and clear. He should avoid being harsh in his speech and ranting. It is also befitting that the students (listeners) do not interrupt the teacher's speech by way of questions that disrupt the audio recordings. The benefit for those present at the seminar is obtained by listening to the explanation and memorizing it, and the benefit for those not present is obtained by them listening to the recorded audio lessons such as Kitab At Tawheed by the Imam of Daw'ah Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhaab(رحمه الله) and The Explanation of Aqeedah Al Wasitiyah, and Tafseer Al Quran by Shaykh Al Islam Ibn Taymiyah (رحمه الله). Also the explanations by Shaykh Muhammad bin Ibrahim –may Allah have mercy on him, and The Noble Shaykh Abdul Azeez bin Baaz (رحمه الله) raise his level in Paradise, and place him with the truthful. Also

the various explanations by our scholars, such as the explanations by Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen (رحمه الله) Shaykh Saleh Al Fowzan (حفظه الله), as well as these recorded lessons.

Thus, it is upon the teacher to be mindful that his lessons are recorded, and people may possibly benefit from them after hundreds of years. Consequently if all (who are present) are silently listening, this will strengthen the teacher in giving his lesson. For this reason Sufyan or Imam Malik -may Allah have mercy on them, and other than them from the people of knowledge used to say:

"If we were energetic, we would mention the full chain of narration, and if we were tired we would not mention the full chain."

Therefore, this matter depends on the teacher himself, just as it depends on the student. The movements of the student, his preparation, reception of the knowledge in a quiet demeanor, and taking notes well, all of these matters build up the teacher to convey beneficial points.

The weapon of the student is his pen and paper.[2]

What is important is that the teacher and student assist one another in successfully producing recorded (audio) materials.

These lessons are prepared specifically for intermediate level students. The teacher should not use a methodology

2 The author will further discuss matters related to the pen later in this work.

of teaching that is surpassed by the more knowledgeable student, nor should it be extremely easy for the beginner student. Rather his methodology of teaching should be on an intermediate level.

This is the character of true teachers from amongst the scholars, according to how Allah has described them in His statement:

"Be you Rabbaniyun (learned men of religion who practice what they know and also preach others), because you are teaching the Book, and you are studying it."

Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) described the Rabaani (a true teacher) from amongst the people of knowledge, that he is one who learners and teaches. As for the individual who learns but does not teach, then this person is not a Rabaani (a true teacher).

Abu Abdullah Al Bukhari (Imam Al Bukhari) said:

"The Rabaani is the one who teaches small knowledge before greater levels of knowledge."

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was given summarized, comprehensive speech. When speech is summarized and beneficial, the regular layman can benefit along with the smarter individual, as well as the person living away from the city, along with those who live in the city (educated and lesser educated). The teacher should benefit intermediate students by mentioning

definitions, principles and foundations. A teacher should avoid presenting detailed descriptions during intensive seminars, this is because the student desires to directly note down definitions and categories. The example of this is the teacher mentioning:

The definition of the major form of shirk is…, and the definition of minor shirk is... and the likes. And what is the difference between minor shirk and hidden shirk?

Also, the example of the teacher saying: This matter is divided into 4 categories…, and other than these examples.

This is what remains with the student, and this (methodology of teaching) is what opens for the student what was once closed. As for the compositional method of teaching, then a student can take that from books, but that which profits is the specific types and categories mentioned. (By doing so) The teacher opens for the student many broad horizons. This is the benefit of taking knowledge from the scholars. If it were not for the categories and types mentioned in matters that appear similar, there would be no greater benefit obtained through these lessons (intensive). In fact, these lessons would have been similar to obtaining knowledge from books without the presence of a teacher. You find a number of authors of classical Fiqh and Aqeedah books mentioning categories by simply stating "and". The example of their statement: Water is clean within itself, it cleans other materials, it is also unclean, or doubtful. And the example of their statement: Shirk is major, minor

and hidden. It is upon the teacher to make the matter easy. He would, for example say:

1. The first category…
2. The second category…
3. The third category…

And the likes… Or he would say:

1. The first type…
2. The second type…
3. The third type…

He would also do the same in affairs of disagreement. He would mention the matter and the different views in order.

He would say, for example:

The first opinion is, its proof is, the way this matter is proven with these proofs is…

Then he would mention the second opinion and the likes.

Finally, he would mention the most correct opinion, although this opinion may not be the most correct with other than him.

From that which is also important is that the student does not look at the teacher in the seminar as if he is an Imam (knowledgeable scholar) in every field, even if the teacher be a professor at a university or other than that. This

is because the student will (in the future) abandon the teacher if he finds him weak in fields of knowledge, and by doing so, he will not benefit from anyone except those who Imam Ath Thahabi described when he said:

"I almost have never seen their likes except in books or in graves (deceased)".

Thus, do not place difficult expectations upon your teacher; you find fault with him in this matter and in that matter. What is vital in a teacher is that he delivers the knowledge and that he is mindful of Allah. He does not attribute to Allah, His Messenger, the religion, nor to Islamic knowledge, that which he does not know from the speech of the people of knowledge. He also does not include his own personal opinions, because the purpose of Islamic lessons is to transmit knowledge as it was delivered by the people of knowledge. Knowledge in this Ummah is what Allah says, what His Messenger said, what The Sahaaba said, and what The Scholars say. Therefore one should not place difficult conditions (expectations) upon the teacher, and by doing so this will allow the student to abstain from ill thoughts of him and consequently his knowledge is keep from the student.

You should also not expect for the teacher to not stumble or error in a matter, especially during intensive courses. It's possible that a student has information that the teacher does not possess. In this case the teacher can benefit from the student.

Ibn Al Kashab Al Hanbali used to say: *"I am a student of my student's students"*. This is a true statement because the teacher benefits just as the student benefits, and the likes.

The recent graduate that teaches in The Ministry of Education in primary, secondary schools, or colleges, initially he will benefit tremendously from his students. But as time goes on, benefiting from his students will decrease and they will more so benefit from him. This is because, in front of him are minds that debate what is being delivered to them, and as a result the teacher concentrates and prepares himself better. But a matter may arise and what is memorized by the scholar may be the weaker opinion, incorrect, or the improper execution. Factors regarding the matter might escape the scholar, he may error in attribution of a hadeeth, or similar to this and the student perhaps may know what is correct in this matter.

Therefore, knowledge is obtained during seminars both by the teacher and the student. The teacher should not feel far above obtaining benefit from a student, and a student should not feel shy, and as a result he abstains from benefiting his teacher. Rather, a student should approach the teacher with respect and shyness and in a manner of seeking clarification.

Accordingly, what is befitting for a student is that he doesn't place extreme expectations upon the teacher that are difficult to met except in the likes of Great Imams such as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Al Bukhari, Ibn Taymiyah, or other than them.

THE THIRD PILLAR

The Student and Advice to the Student of Knowledge

This is referring to the student of knowledge who is attending the seminars; he has (distinctive) characteristics, personality and traits.

THIS FIRST ADVICE:

Sincerity

He should be sincere in hoping from his generous Lord, and by doing so, Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) will open his heart to knowledge and achievement. The heart is distracted by distractions and thoughts, thus while one is quietly listening a thought will come to him and deter him from benefiting. After that a person desires to gather himself (concentrate), but it is extremely difficult, and when this takes place points of benefit become scattered and the later information erases the earlier.

Therefore, it is incumbent that one truly turns to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and makes Du'aa (supplication) that He gives him understanding (fiqh) in the religion, and that He allows one to profit and be patient with knowledge. This is because it is mandatory that one possess patience in seeking knowledge, and in order for that to take place one must be sincere and truthful with Allah (سبحانه و تعالى), and turn to Him in the correct manner because knowledge is worship.

Verily the Angels lower their wings for the student of knowledge out of pleasure for what he is carrying out, and verily everything upon the earth and in the heavens seeks forgiveness for the scholar, even the fish in the sea. This is indeed a great merit.

So purify, Oh Student of knowledge!, your thoughts of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) and sincerely turn to Him in order for Him to open your heart to knowledge and make it firm within your heart.

THE SECOND ADVICE:

Class preparation, such as pen and paper

The pen should be ready prior to the lesson. This point was stressed by Al Khateeb in his book **'Ja'mee Al Jam'ee'** and also by Ibn Abdul Al Birr in his book **'Al Jam'ee lee Bayan Al Ilm wa Fadlihi'** (The Compilation Explaining Knowledge and it's Merits), and in other than these two works.

From those matters which are considered deficient is that a student attends a lesson and neglects to bring a pen, or he brings one that doesn't contain ink.

With regards to paper, it is befitting that the student prepares a notebook for every subject, or a notebook which is divided into several subjects. All of the aforementioned methods are according to a person's mental organization. If a student's mind is distracted,

this will appear in his knowledge and notebooks. It is not befitting for a student to write several subjects on one paper. He should likewise refrain from writing notes in the margin spaces of the text books, this will cause information to become crowded and prevent one from referring back to it at a later time.
Because of this, Imam Ahmed was asked about writing in small print, he responded:

"I dislike this because one does not know when he will need this information, and it's possible that he needs it and he is no longer able to refer back to it (illegible)."

This statement is a reality. Notes taken within texts books (in margin spaces) are not organized and are mixed with the written text; it's also possible that the penmanship is unpleasant.

Paper is available these days and cheap, all praise is to Allah.

With regards to writing in notebooks,[3] there is an arrangement suitable to be followed, and it consists of:

A student should place within the text which he is studying sequential numbers from one to the end of the text, and every topic which the teacher comments on the student places that affair on an individual page. He would then place the following topic on a separate page. He should do this even if the comment on that issue is only one line.

3 Refer to Appendix-A for an example of note taking

He should not say: The page is blank!
It's possible that he needs that space in the future. If the student wishes to add more detail to an issue that the scholar did not expound on, he would first place the origin of the topic, and then add more detailed information. These explanations (by the scholars or teachers) would then become the foundation for larger explanations for the student in the future if Allah wills.

THE THIRD ADVICE:

Related to the student that is not able to attend all the seminars, but instead he attends during his free time

It is upon this student to choose the field that he needs most in his religion, in order to complete his knowledge in that particular subject. For example, it's possible he did not study the subject of Tawheed, or he studied it long ago and desires to review it. This subject would be a priority in his choice of subjects. He would then use his remaining free time for other subjects that he is interested in. Therefore, it is binding that the student of knowledge chooses the suitable subject and time.

THE FOURTH ADVICE:

Excellent review and preparation for lessons

How can a student review and prepare for lessons if they are nonstop? This is done by him memorizing the text prior to hearing the explanation from the scholar. This

methodology will produce true, structured knowledge. One should also prepare by reviewing important issues (before the lesson). The student should read a line or a page and focus on the important issues. By doing so, he prepares himself to understand these issues once covered by the teacher. It is not a condition that the preparation of the student is similar to that of the teacher. The purpose of this preparation is not merely for the student to prepare for learning, but rather he should combine his present knowledge with what is being presented by the teacher, and by doing so the knowledge of the student will grow over an extended period of time. The student should prepare for the lesson, and as a result he will notice how the scholar handles the text, and how the student himself handled the text. For example, the text being taught is *Bulugh Al Maram* and the subject being taught from the book is the chapter of Prayer, the student reviews a Hadith from the text by referring to *Subul As Salam*, *Fathul Barre,* and other than them. The student should review and see what he comprehends about the Hadith, he then compares what he read to how the scholar handled the Hadith. There is not doubt that this methodology will provide the student with benefits that he was possibly unaware of.

It is also befitting that the teacher chooses from amongst his students those who are capable of being teachers and he focuses on them even more. He should teach them how to study, how to teach, and how to organize issues. It is possible that a student approaches his teacher and says: "I attended a seminar with you last year and heard from you the explanation of *Bulugh Al Maram* or *Forty Hadith*

of Imam An Nawaawee….." It's possible that the teacher forgot this particular student due to the large number of students present at the seminar, or maybe he remembered him. But the teacher never forgets the diligent student because he creates an impression about this student and his dealings with the text, his understanding of the Hadith, and his character with the teacher.

THE FIFTH ADVICE:

Writing notes of benefits from the teacher

The student should not depend on the audio recording during seminars. It is upon a student not to say: "There is no need to write as long as the recording is present". This is a tremendous mistake that many students have fallen into. The student writing what is being presented by the scholar influences his preparation for knowledge and it also influences his methodology of seeking knowledge in the manner that it should be sought. Acquiring knowledge must include difficulties, suffering and struggle. Also by writing notes, a student produces the ability to summarize information. This is because he will not be able to write every single letter mentioned by the teacher. For this reason, it is befitting to distinguish between what was dictated to the student from what he heard. It is possible that much information mentioned by the teacher is lost when a summary is written.

Therefore, what is the purpose of writing? The purpose of writing is that the student forms the ability to summarize information. He hears and than he summarizes. It

is noticed that in the beginning of the seminars, the scholar hastens in his speech and the student is not able to take notes, but the next time the student is able to write, however he misses some information. Similar to this, a time will come where the student will be able to completely write what is being presented and he is able to summarize using the most perfect examples because he has developed a skill, and this skill can only be developed through practice. How does one practice? Practice is performed, in addition to what was previously mentioned, by not depending on the audio recording.

THE SIXTH ADVICE:

Mercy between the students

It is possible that various categories of people attend the seminars.

1. From them are those who are present to seek knowledge
2. From them are those who are beginners
3. Some seek to attend a gathering of remembrance, especially if the lecture is after Fajr prayer or during times that supplication is answered.
4. Others attend to gain a particular benefit and any benefit gained will suffice them.

That which is befitting in reality is that the students care for one another. The student should teach his beginning brother the correct methodology and provide him with advice. Due to this, it is appropriate that students have

mercy with one another during Islamic lessons, and in all aspects of knowledge. It possibly occurs that the scholars begin their lessons with advice to the student to be merciful. It is because of this that the first Hadith transmitted in Ijaazat (permission and authorization to narrate Hadiths) is the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم):

"The merciful will have mercy shown to them by Ar Rahman. Be merciful to those on the earth, and The One Who is in the sky will be merciful to you"[4]

Question: Why do students learn this Hadith?

Answer: Know –may Allah have mercy upon you- from the manners of a student of knowledge that Allah has blessed and has mercy on him in his knowledge, is that he (the student) is merciful with those around him; he guides them, teaches them and assists them, etc. Thus, if you are merciful in your quest for knowledge, with the creation, with your companions, with your friends and those attending the seminars and you assist them with good, then you are given glad tidings of the mercy of Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) to you with His true promise in the statement of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) *"The merciful will have mercy shown to them by Ar Rahman..."*

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4 Reported by Ahmed and Abu Dawud; This Hadith is known to the scholars of Hadith as: Al Musalsil bil Awaliyah (sequenced with precedence), because every scholar in the chain of narration mentioned about his teacher: "I heard so-and-so say, and it was the first narration I heard from him". Every narrator in the chain mentions the same pattern until the chain reaches the generation after the Tabi'een (Atba' At Tabi'een).

CONCLUSION

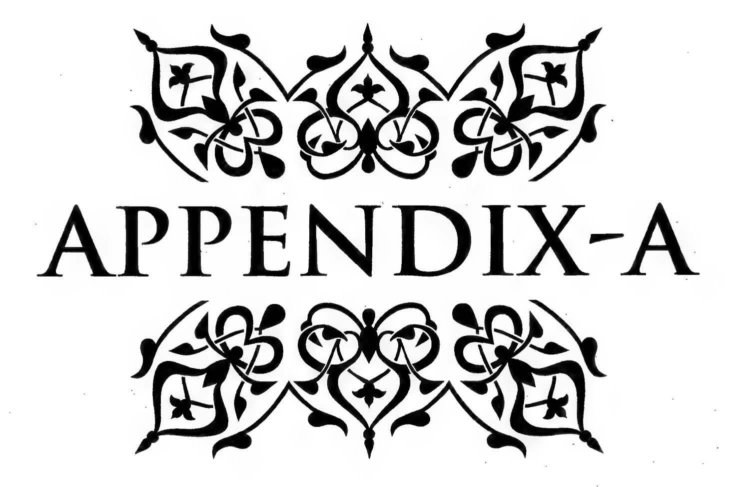
I ask Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) to make you (all) blessed and to benefit (others) through you. The meaning of Allah making a person blessed as it was mentioned in His statement in Surah Maryâm, informing of the statement of 'Essa:

"And He has made me blessed whose soever I be"

Meaning that a person teaches people good. The scholars mentioned in explanation of this verse:

The blessed person -from amongst the servants of Allah- is the one who teaches people good (Tafseer Ibn Kathir).

Thus I ask Allah to make you (all) blessed, and to benefit (others) through you. I ask Him to make these lessons beneficial for those delivering them and those attending them, and for all. I ask that He grants them guidance and righteousness, and that He blesses me and you with understanding of the religion, and compliance with the Sunnah, and that He does not leave us to ourselves even for the blink of an eye (slight moment of time). Verily He The Most Glorified is generous and gracious. Oh! Allah, forgive us all, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Messenger Muhammad.



APPENDIX-A

The English Translation of *Thalaathatul-Usool*

In the name of Allaah, the Most-Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

Know, may Allaah have mercy upon you, that it is obligatory upon you to have knowledge of four matters:

(i) Knowledge (*al-'Ilm*), which is knowledge and awareness of Allaah, and knowledge of His Prophet,
and knowledge of the religion of Islaam with the proofs.
(ii) Action upon that.
(iii) Calling to that.
(iv) Patiently persevering and bearing any harm encountered upon that way.

The proof is the saying of Allaah, the Most High: **"By time, mankind is in loss, except for those who truly believe and worship Allaah alone, and do righteous deeds, performing that which is obligatory upon them and avoiding that which they are forbidden, and enjoin one another with patient perseverance upon obedience to Allaah and in facing harm and trials."** [Soorah al-'Asr (103)]

Ash-Shaafi'ee, may Allaah, the Most High, have mercy upon him, said: "If Allaah had sent down to His creation no other proof besides this *Soorah*, it would have been sufficient for them."

Al-Bukhaaree may Allaah have mercy upon him, said:"'Chapter: Knowledge precedes speech and action' and the proof is the saying of Allaah, the Most High, **"*Know* that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, and ask forgiveness of your Lord for your sins."** [Soorah Muhammad (47):19]. So He began by mentioning knowledge before speech or action.'

Know, may Allaah have mercy upon you, that it is obligatory upon every Muslim, male and female, to learn and act upon the following three matters:

THE FIRST: That Allaah created us and provided sustenance for us, and He did not leave us without a purpose rather He sent Messengers to us. So whoever obeys him will enter Paradise, and whoever rejects and disobeys him will enter the Fire, and the proof is the Saying of the Most High: **"We sent a Messenger to you, O people, as a witness in favour of you or against you on the Day of Resurrection, just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. But the Pharaoh denied**

بسم الله الرحمان الرحيم

Thalaatha Usool

1. The scholars mention that knowing Allah means that a person knows Him and accepts His religion and legislation. It also means submitting to His orders and abstaining from what He forbade....

2. knowing the Prophet Muhammed does not merely mean to know his name and place of birth, rather it means to love him, follow him, study his life and spread his call....

3. The word Islam has a general meaning and a specific meaning:

the general meaning is to worship Allah without associating partners with Him....

the specific meaning is to worship Allah following the legislation that was revealed to Muhammed (sas)

4. Muhammed bin Idrees, student of Imam Malik and teacher of Imam Ahmed.

5. Muhammed bin Ismaee'l, the scholars say: His book is the most authentic book after the Quran and after his book is Sahih Muslim

This is an example of how the notebook page should look.



SELECTED FATAAWA ON SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

Oh my brother in Islam! Know that knowledge is one of the greatest actions which can be performed by a Muslim, and indeed if a person purifies his intention in seeking it, Allah will make the path to Jenna easy for him. The following are just a few Fataawa (religious verdicts) by some of the senior scholars of our time. The purpose of these Fataawa is to give you some direction in your quest to seek knowledge and preserve it, but before mentioning the Fataawa we would like to mention a few statements of the Salaf concerning knowledge and its tremendous merits.

Ali bin Abee Talib (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Verily knowledge is more precious than wealth. Knowledge preserves you, while you preserve wealth. Knowledge judges, while wealth is judged upon. The possessors of wealth have died, while the possessors of knowledge live on. Their (the scholars) bodies have passed away, but they are still present in the hearts of the people."
(Adab Al Dunya wa Deen pg.48)

Abdullah bin Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Studying knowledge a portion of the night is more beloved to me than spending a portion of it in worship."
(Musanaf Abdul Razzaq 11/253)

Mua'th bin Jabal (رضي الله عنه) said:
"Learn knowledge, for indeed learning it brings about fear of Allah, and seeking it is worship. Reviewing knowledge is glorification (of Allah), researching it is Jihad, spreading it is nearness to Allah and teaching it to those who do not know is charity."
(Tethkirat Al Sam'e wal Mutakelem pg26)

Sufyan Al Thowri said:

"I do not know anything more superior than knowledge for the person who seeks it sincerely for Allah."
(Tahtheeb Tarikh Demishk 3/345)

He also said:

"I do not know of anything after Prophethood greater than spreading knowledge."
(Tarikh Baghdad 10/160)

He (Sufyan) also mentioned:

"A man is in need of knowledge more than he is in need of bread and meat."
(Hilyatul Awliyah 7/659)

He likewise said:

"The scholars are similar to rain, wherever they fall, they benefit."
(Jam'ee Bayaan Al 'Elm wa Fadlihee 1/56)

Al Hasan Al Basri said:

"Learning a portion of knowledge and teaching it to someone is more beloved to me than possessing the (treasures of the) world and spending it in the way of Allah."
(Al Faqeeh wal Al Mutafaqeeh 1/102)

He also said:

"If there were no scholars, people would become like animals."
(Muktsir Minhaaj Al Qasideen pg.17)

Malik bin Dinar mentioned:
"The people have left the world without tasting (experiencing) the most delicious thing present in it. It was said to him: And what is that? He replied: Knowledge of Allah."
(Siyar 'Alaam Al Nubalah 5/363)

Al Zuhree said:

"Allah is not worshipped with anything greater than knowledge."
(Al Bidayah wal Nihayah 9/345)

Imam Al Shafi'ee said:

"Reading Hadith is greater than voluntary prayer."
(Siyar 'Alam Al Nubelah 10/23)

Abu Muslim Al Kuwalani said:

"The scholars upon the earth are similar to the stars in the sky. If they are present, the people are guided, but if they disappear, the people deviate."
(Tethkirat Al Sam'e wal Mutakelem pg.25)

SELECTED FATAAWA ON SEEKING KNOWLEDGE

BY
SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ,
SHEIKH SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN AND OTHERS

1. There are several individuals these days who claim to possess knowledge and because of this people have become very confused in their religion. Is there a criterion that a person can use to distinguish a true scholar from an imitator? Please benefit us, may Allah grant you much good.

Answer: In the Name of Allah, and all praise belongs to Him. The sign of a true scholar is clear; he is the individual that presents the Quran and the Sunnah as proofs. You become aware of his correctness by asking the people of knowledge who know him. Also, a person should investigate and ask the trustworthy people about him, in order to be safe that he is (actually) from the people of knowledge. The true scholar is furthermore known by his (correct) religion and uprightness, and his diligence in seeking verdicts and by the proofs he presents. He is also known by his actions in addition to the recommendations mentioned by those who know him. It is not befitting that a person takes this matter lightly and asks anybody, rather one should investigate, as it relates to his religion, and ask the trustworthy and reliable from amongst the people of knowledge in his county or in the country he travels to.
This should be done in order for him to be at ease

because he has asked the people of knowledge regarding this matter.

SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ (AL FATAWA PG.118)

2. Indeed the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) dedicated a specific day for teaching the religion to the Muslim females, and he would likewise allow them to attend lessons in the masjid behind the men. (But) why don't the scholars follow the precious Messenger (in dedicating a specific day for teaching females), even though (we admit) they (the scholars) follow a portion of his guidance, but this is not sufficient and we request more. May Allah grant you much good.

Answer: There is no doubt that this was the action of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) and it is also the way of the scholars, by the mercy of Allah. I have done such an action several times in Mecca, Taif and Jeddah. I don't not have any hesitation in devoting a special day for the females at any location if they request this from me. This is also the opinion of my companions (other scholars).

SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ (AL FATAWA AL JAME'A 3/1080)

3. All praise is for Allah, I am a man who has a collection of beneficial books but I do not read them all, instead I choose some of them for reading. Do I fall into sin because of collecting books in my home? I should also inform you that I do allow people to borrow beneficial books from my collection and then return them.

Answer: There is no sin upon a Muslim for collecting beneficial books and keeping them in his home for review, benefit, and also loaning them to those who visit him from the people who are involved in knowledge so that they can also benefit from this collection. There is also no sin upon the owner of this collection if he doesn't review or read from many of his books. As for lending them to other trustworthy people in order for them to benefit from them, this action is legislated and it is considered a means of getting closer to Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). This is because of that fact that by doing so, a person is assisting others to obtain knowledge, it is from what is meant by the statement of Allah:

{*And enjoin upon one another piety, and enjoin upon one another patience*} Surah Al Maida:2

This is also illustrated in the statement of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم):

"Allah is in the service of His servant as long as the servant is in the service of his brother"

SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ (AL FATAWA PG.776)

4. Does the individual fall into sin if he memorizes (from) the Quran and then forgets thereafter due to him busying himself with (other) matters of life?

Answer: The correct opinion is that a person does not fall into sin, but it is befitting that a Muslim preserves

that which he has memorized of the Quran and that he safeguards it in order not to forget. This is done in accordance with the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم):

"Safeguard the Quran, for verily it moves (leaves) quicker than the tied camel."
That which is of greatest importance is that the Muslim ponders over the meaning of the Quran and acts upon it. The Quran is a proof for the person who acts upon it, but as for the one who abandons it, then it becomes a proof against him. This is based on the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم):

"The Quran is a proof for you or against you."
Recorded by Sahih Muslim on the authority of Al Harith Al Ash'ari in a long narration.

SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ (AL FATAWA PG.776)

5. Which is better, seeking knowledge or standing in night prayer?

Answer: Seeking knowledge is better than standing in night prayer, because seeking knowledge, as it was mentioned by Imam Ahmed –may Allah have mercy on him:

"Nothing compares to seeking knowledge, for the person who has corrected his intention. He intends to remove ignorance from himself and from others".

Thus, if a person stays up the first part of the night seeking knowledge sincerely seeking the face of Allah, whether he is learning or teaching the people, then this action is better than standing in night prayer. However, if a person has the ability to combine between the aforementioned matters (seeking knowledge and night prayer), then this is preferred. It is because of this that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) instructed Abu Hurairah to perform Witr prayer before going to sleep.

The Scholars mention the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) advised Abu Hurairah to perform Witr prayer before going to sleep because Abu Hurairah would spend a large portion of the night reviewing the narrations he heard from the Messenger of Allah.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/50)

6. Is a person excused from learning Islamic knowledge due to busying himself with other secular studies, or because of his job, or other than that?

Answer: Seeking Islamic knowledge is a collective obligation, meaning, if there are individuals who seek it, then seeking knowledge thereby becomes only recommended upon others and not obligatory. Although it is possible that seeking knowledge does become obligatory on a specific individual, such as in the case of a person who desires to perform a specific act of worship, knowledge of how to perform that action then becomes mandatory upon him.

Therefore, if a person is distracted from seeking knowledge due to the needs of his family or other than that, but at that same time he is able to observe the religious obligations and acts of worship, we then hold this individual to be excused and there is no sin upon him. However, it is befitting that he learns according to his ability.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA VOL.26)

7. The Sheikh was asked pertaining to a student of knowledge who would like to travel with his Muslim brothers to seek knowledge, but his parents prevent him from doing so. What is the ruling in this matter?

Answer: If there is a major need by his parent for him to stay, then staying with them is better. This individual can stay with his parents and continue to seek knowledge. Kindness toward one's parents takes precedence to fighting in the way of Allah and knowledge is considered fighting in the way of Allah (Jihad), and therefore kind treatment of one's parents takes precedence over seeking knowledge if the parents are in need of their son. But if the parents are not in need of the son and this student is able to increase in knowledge by travelling, then it is befitting for him to do so, but he should not forget the rights of his parents when he returns. But, if it is known that the parents wish to prevent their son from traveling to seek knowledge due to their dislike for knowledge, then the son should not obey them and likewise it is no longer mandatory for him to seek their permission.

This is due to the fact that they seek to prevent him from travelling to seek knowledge due to their hatred of the knowledge itself.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA VOL.26)

8. What is your advice regarding acting upon knowledge?

Answer: It is mandatory that a person acts upon his knowledge, because the fruit of knowledge is action. If a person does not act upon his knowledge he will consequently be from amongst the first people to be punished in the in the fire on the Day of Judgment. It was mentioned (in lines of poetry):
"The scholar who did not act upon his knowledge, will be punished before the worshippers of the idols."
Thus, if a person does not act upon his knowledge, this will lead to failure in knowledge, lose of blessing, and forgetfulness of knowledge. This is based on the statement of Allah:

{*Due to their breach of their covenant, we cursed them and made their hearts grow hard. They change the words from their places and have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them*}
Surah Al Ma'idah:13

The abandonment mentioned in the above verse includes:

- A mental abandonment
- A physical (in actions) abandonment

Thus, the meaning is, they abandon the knowledge mentally, or they abandon it physically by not acting upon it. This is because 'Al Nisyaan' in the Arabic language refers to abandonment. But on the other hand, if a person acts upon knowledge, then Allah will increase him in guidance. Allah said:

{*Those who are guided, He (Allah) increases their guidance*}

He (Allah) will also grant them Taqwa, as Allah continues to mention in the verse:

{...*and He grants them Taqwa*}
Surah Muhammed: 17

Thus, if a person acts upon his knowledge, Allah will grant him further knowledge that he did not previously possess. Due to this, some of the Salaf mentioned: Knowledge searches for action, if it does not find it, it will depart.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/104)

9. Is it permissible to seek knowledge by way of books only without returning to the scholars, especially if it is difficult to seek knowledge from the scholars due to their small numbers? Also, what do you say about the statement: "Whoever takes books as his scholars, his mistakes are more than accuracy."?

Answer: There is no doubt that knowledge is obtained by (sitting with) the scholars and reading from books. This is because the book of the scholar is (similar to) the scholar himself. The scholar is teaching by way of his book, and consequently, if a person doesn't have the ability to seek knowledge directly from the people of knowledge, he should then do so by way of books. (But it should be mentioned) seeking knowledge by sitting with the scholars is closer (more efficient) than seeking it from books. Since the person who seeks knowledge from books exhausts himself more and this method requires more diligence in accomplishing knowledge. Also, some affairs may overlook the student, such as legislated principals which are derived and established by the people of knowledge along with regulations.

Therefore, it is mandatory that a person has a individual from the people of knowledge to refer back to if he has the ability.

As for the statement: "Whoever takes books as his scholar...." This is not completely true, nor is it completely mistaken. As for the person who takes knowledge from any book he sees, there is no doubt this person will error much. But as for the individual who focuses on the books of the well known, trustworthy, knowledgeable people, then this individual will not error much, but rather he will be correct in most of what he transmits.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN
(MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/197)

10. Is there a specific du'a (supplication) that one can say for the purpose of memorizing the Quran?

Answer: I am not aware of any du'a for the memorization of the Quran, except one hadith wherein it is mentioned that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) taught a du'a to Ali bin Abee Talib (رضي الله عنه), but the authenticity of this hadith is questionable. Ibn Kathir mentioned: It (this hadith) is clearly strange, rather it is incorrect.
It was likewise mentioned by the Noble Muhameed Rasheed Ridaa, in his comments for this hadith: In fact, its wording is that of fabricated narrations. It is not the wording of the most eloquent of speakers, Muhammed (صلى الله عليه و سلم), Ali, nor anyone of their time.

Imam Al Thahibi mentioned: This is a rejected, abnormal narration.

The method of memorizing the Quran is that an individual constantly memorizes it. People have 2 ways of accomplishing this:

1. A person memorizes one verse at a time, or two or three. This is based on the length of the verses or their shortness.

2. A person can also memorize a page at a time.
People vary; from them are those who prefer to memorize a full page by repeating it over and over again until it is memorized. Others prefer to memorize a verse by repeating it over until it is memorized, then he memorizes the following verse. He follows this path until

he completes what he desires to memorize.

It is also befitting, whether a person memorizes using the first method or the second, that a person does not continue until he has become proficient in the previous memorized verses. This is in order to prevent the individual from building without a solid foundation. It is also recommended that a person reviews what he has previously memorized every day, especially in the morning. If the person feels that he has grasped the previous verses, only then should he move on to the new ones.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/199)

11. I would like to begin learning, but I do not know how to start, what advice could you offer me?

Answer: The best methodology for the student of knowledge is to begin by understanding the speech of Allah –Aza wa Jel- by way of the trustworthy books of Tafsir, such as Tafsir Ibn Katheer, and Tafsir Al Bagawi. Then a student should focus on understanding what has authentically come by way of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) from his Sunnah which is present in the reliable books of Hadith, such as Sahih Al Bukhari, and Sahih Muslim –may Allah have mercy on the both of them. Then a student should focus on the books of correct Aqeedah (belief), such as Al Aqeedah Al Wasitiyah by Sheikh Ul Islam Ibn Taymiyah –may Allah have mercy on him, and also Kitab Al Tawheed by Sheikh Ul Isalm

Muhammed bin Abdul Wahab –may Allah have mercy on him. The student should focus on the summarized books of Fiqh and study them based on the school of thought that he feels is closest to the Quran and Sunnah. After a student progresses in knowledge, he can then read the larger books and accordingly increase in knowledge by way of them.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/200)

12. Which is better, devoting one's time to Islamic propagation (Da'wah), or devoting one's time to seeking knowledge?

Answer: Seeking knowledge is better and more preferred. It is also possible that a person propagates and at the same time seeks knowledge. A person cannot call without possessing knowledge. Allah said in the Quran:

{*Say, this is my path. I call to my Lord upon clear proof*}

Thus, how can there be propagation without knowledge!? There is no one that has called without having knowledge, and the one who seeks to do so without having obtained knowledge will not be successful.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/329)

13. Being that forgetfulness is a hindrance from learning, what are some elements or methods that assist

preservation and memorization of knowledge?

Answer: Amongst the greatest matters that assist a person in preserving knowledge is acting upon one's knowledge. Allah (سبحانه و تعالى) said:

{*Those who are guided, (Allah) increases them in guidance and grants them Taqwa*}
Surah Muhammed:17

Therefore, if a person acts upon their knowledge they will increase in it, and they will be granted Taqwa, meaning worship and fear.

Also from the elements that assist in preserving knowledge is that a person devotes his heart to it, this is done so by not allowing oneself to be distracted by other than knowledge, rather knowledge becomes his focal point and obsession. Likewise from the elements that assist a person in preserving knowledge is constant review and memorization.

Furthermore from the matters that assist a person in preserving knowledge is that one recalls the rulings and proofs for every action he performs.Also from that which assists in the preservation of knowledge is that the student totally applies himself to knowledge. He should not seek knowledge only when he has free time. Because of this it was mentioned:

"Give knowledge your all, and you will obtain a portion of it, but if you give knowledge only a portion of your time,

you will not obtain any of it."

Therefore, it is mandatory that a student dedicates himself to knowledge day and night, and that he evaluates what he knows to what he acts upon, this is done in order to preserve knowledge.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/130)

14. What is your response to the person who says: We (Muslims) are in need of callers, and we are not in need of scholars?

Answer: The reality, is that the Islamic Ummah (Nation) is in need of callers, and we are likewise in need of scholars who immerse themselves into the oceans of knowledge and extract its treasures and jewels. Likewise, the Ummah is in need of callers who instill in the people the love of good and turning toward it, but what is mandatory is that these callers are wise. They should know when to speak the appropriate statements and when not to. There are some callers that allow their emotions to lead them to say things which wisdom demands them not to say.

As for the scholars, there is no doubt that they are the individuals that spread (teach) in the society, the meanings of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah, in order that the people are guided. Therefore, every field has its demand and the Ummah is in need of these and those. As for the need of the caller to possess knowledge, there

is no doubt that the caller must possess knowledge and he must know how to call to this knowledge.
Did not Allah say to His Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم):

{Say this is my path. I call to my Lord upon clear understanding}

Meaning, upon knowledge of the legislation that I am calling to. This includes knowledge of those who are being called, and knowledge of the state of affairs, the time and the place. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the student to know the aforementioned.

In conclusion, the Muslim Ummah is in need of scholars and callers, and if Allah blesses a person to become a caller and a scholar, then this is from the blessings of Allah.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA VOL.26)

15. There is a group of females that are unable to attend the seminars held in the masjid, and due to this they are forced to buy the recordings in order to benefit from the seminars. Do they receive a similar reward (the glad tidings of the descending of the Angels and the encirclement of mercy) to that of the person who physically attended the seminars?

Answer: Those who listen to recordings are not similar to those who physically attend the gatherings of knowledge and participate in the gatherings, but the listener (to the

recordings) does receive a reward for benefiting from the lesson and seeking knowledge. There is an abundant amount of guidance and uprightness benefitted from these audio recordings. The audio tape, as is known, is easy to carry and easy to benefit from. A person is able to listen to it at his workplace or in his car while driving. It is because of this that these audio tapes are a great blessing from Allah (سبحانه و تعالى). It is upon us to be grateful to Allah for this ease and simplicity.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/140)

16. What is your advice for the person who forgets much of what he reads and learns?

Answer: The most important factor which assists a person in preserving knowledge is acting upon it. This is based on the statement of Allah:

{*Those who are guided, (Allah) increased them in guidance and granted them Taqwa*}
Surah Muhammed:17,

And Allah also said:

{*Allah increase guidance to those whom are guided*}
Surah Maryam:76

Therefore, the more a person acts upon his knowledge, the more Allah will increase his memorization and understanding. This is based on the general statement of

Allah in the aforementioned verse.

It is reported that Imam Al Shafi'ee said:

"I complained to Waq'ee concerning my poor memorization and he instructed me to abandon sin. He said: Verily knowledge is light, and the light of Allah is not given to a sinner"
Also from the matters that assist memorization is abstaining from affairs that distract one's mind from knowledge. Indeed the person is human, if his mind is distracted, his ability to obtain knowledge will become weak.

Also from the affairs that assist memorization is constantly researching with your companions for the purpose of reaching the truth and not for the purpose of defeating others.

And likewise, sincerity is also one of the elements that assist in preserving knowledge.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAWA 26/130)

17. Is it permissible for females to attend Islamic conferences?

Answer: If the conferences are beneficial and the females are separated from the males, just as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) used to give lectures to the males, he likewise would go and deliver lectures to the females. Therefore, if

the females are separated, and they do not travel except with a mahram, and the audio speakers are placed on their separated side, there is no harm in this, by the will of Allah.

SHEIKH MUQBIL BIN HADEE AL WAD'EE (GHARATIL ASHRETA 2/192)

18. After you have mentioned the importance of knowledge and dedicating one's time in seeking it, does that mean that a student should distance himself from people and other actions of good and instead dedicate himself to knowledge? Please clarify this matter because it is a very important concern.

Answer: It is mandatory that knowledge is given an adequate amount of time and effort. This is accomplished by devoting a sufficient amount of time to knowledge. That which remains of time is spent performing other actions, such as gathering with people for some sort of benefit and calling them to good, and other than this from affairs. But that which should be given the highest priority is the time allotted for seeking knowledge.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN (AL MUNTAQA MIN FATAWA 1/40)

19. What are the matters that are incumbent upon the Muslim to learn with regards to his religion?

Answer: It is incumbent for the Muslim to learn all of the affairs (foundations) related to his religion, such as the affairs of Aqeedah (belief), and Shari 'a (legislation). This

is done by a person learning matters related to Aqeedah and what is obligatory upon him with regards to these affairs, what opposes them and what perfects them as well as what decreases them. This is done in order that a person's Aqeedah is correct and free of fault. It is likewise incumbent upon a Muslim to learn the rulings pertaining to actions in the religion. This is so that a person can fulfill that which Allah has made obligatory upon him and abandon that which Allah has forbidden for him, this is all done based on clear knowledge.

Allah mentioned in the Quran:

{*Know, that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and then seek forgiveness for your sins and the sins of the believing men and the believing women*}
Surah Muhammed:19.

In the aforementioned verse Allah begin with knowledge before statements and actions. Therefore, it is mandatory that a person combines knowledge and action. Knowledge without action is not sufficient, but rather it will cause the anger of Allah to befall him and it will be a proof against the individual. Likewise, actions performed without knowledge are not accepted because they are considered improper. Indeed Allah has ordered us to seek refuge in him from the paths of those who have earned the anger of Allah and those who have gone astray in the last part of Surah Al Fatiha. This is done in every unit (Raka't) of our prayer.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN (AL MUNTAQA MIN

FATAWA 1/36)

20. I would like to seek knowledge but I don't know how to start, it is also difficult for me to call the scholars or to reach the places of knowledge. Please direct me of the correct manner of seeking knowledge, may Allah bless you.
Answer: Knowledge is divided into two categories:

a. Knowledge which is incumbent upon everyone to learn. This is the knowledge which a person needs to upright in his religion. This category of knowledge is easily obtained, all praise is for Allah. There are many books written in explanation of this category and these works are summarized. A person should read these works either to a scholar or by himself, and if he is approaches something he does not understand then he should ask the people of knowledge so that he can have certainty about being upon the correct Aqeedah (belief) and preserving the Salat, Zakat, Siyam and Hajj.

b. Knowledge which is other than the previous mentioned category. This category is considered a collective obligation, meaning, if some people seek this category of knowledge, then it is no longer obligatory upon the rest of the Muslim community.
If a person is not able to seek this category of knowledge, no sin befalls him. The female is not blameworthy if she is not able to learn matters related to transactions or inheritance and wills. She is excused from learning this knowledge and similarly is the male.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN(AUDIO FATAWA WWW.ALFAWZAN.WS)

21. What is your opinion of a person who advises those who approach him and inform that they would like to dedicate their time to seeking knowledge, he advises them to do so and informs them that there is no problem in leaving off work for the purpose of dedicating one's time to seeking knowledge, and that Allah will provide wealth in the future. He informs that if dedicating oneself to knowledge and worship was forbidden, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) would have never allowed Abu Hurairah to seek knowledge from him while in a state of hunger and not work, as well as the people of Suffah (poor companions who lived in the Prophet's masjid).

Answer: The people of Suffah sought knowledge from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) for a limited period of time. They came to seek knowledge and they were hosted by the Prophet, and then they left. They were not permanently living in Suffah and not working. In fact, it is reported that they used to work, some of them were teachers of the Quran, and therefore they were not totally void of work. There is no problem in a person seeking knowledge and seeking wealth. He should allot a portion of his time to knowledge and the other portion for seeking earnings. There is no conflict between these two matters.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN (AUDIO FATAWA WWW.ALFAWZAN.WS)

22. Which is more preferred (for a female), attending to the needs of her home and husband, or total devotion

to seeking knowledge and hiring a maid to attend to the needs of the home?

Answer: It is mandatory that a female become knowledgeable in her religion according to her ability, but attending to the needs of her husband and obedience to him, as well as raising the children, this is also a major obligation. Therefore, it is befitting that a female allot a portion of her day, even if it be a short portion of time daily. She can also designate a portion of her day for reading, and the rest of the time she spends fulfilling her daily responsibilities. Thus, she does not abandon seeking knowledge, and likewise she does not abandon her other responsibilities and her children, and leave their rearing for the maid. Instead, she should be balanced in this matter. She should give a bit of her time to seeking knowledge, even if it is short, and the rest is used for the daily responsibilities of the home.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN (AL FATAWA AL JAME'AT 3/1085)

23. Is it permissible for a Muslim to abandon recitation of the Quran for the duration of a full year, not reading it except in Ramadan?

Answer: First we must explain the meaning of abandonment of the Quran. Indeed Allah has mentioned abandonment of the Quran in His Statement:

{*And The Messenger said: Oh my Lord, verily my people have adandoned this Quran*}

Surah Al Furqan:30

Ibn Kathir mentioned: This is because the mushrikoon (idolaters) would not pay attention to nor listen to the Quran, as Allah mentioned about them:

{The disbelievers said: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise during is recitation (in order not to hear it)}
Surah Al Fusitah:26

Therefore, if the Quran was recited in their company they would make much noise and talk about other matters in order not to hear it. This is considered abandonment and rejection of faith in the Quran. Disbelief in the Quran is also considered abandonment, lack of contemplating over it and pondering over its meaning is likewise considered abandonment. Not acting upon it and confining to its orders and obstaining from its prohibitions is too considered abandonment of it. Similarly, preferring other than it, such as poetry, or other statements, music, or speech or preferring any path other than the Quran is likewise considered abandonment of it. (end of the speech of Ibn Kathir)

Ibn Al Qayyim mentioned in Al Fawid that abandonment of the Quran is of several types:

1. Not listening to nor believing in it and ignoring it.
2. Not acting upon it and stopping at its Halal and Haram, even if a person reads and believes in it.
3. Not judging by it and referring to its judgment in matters of the foundation of the religion as well as

secondary matters.
4. Not contemplating or seeking to understand its meanings and pondering over what Allah intends by it.
5. Not using it as a cure and medicine from all ailments of the heart and its diseases.

All of the above is included in the statement of Allah:

{*And the Messenger said: Oh my Lord, verily my people have abandoned this Quran*}

And indeed some categories of abandonment are less blameworthy than others. (End of the speech of Ibn Al Qayyim)

This is the speech of the people of knowledge on the issue of abandonment of the Quran. As for what was mentioned in the question related to recitation of the Quran, the scholars have mentioned that it is recommended to perform a complete recitation of the Quran at least once a week. Meaning, within a year one should complete recitation of the Quran every week. Abdullah bin Ahmed (Hanbal) said:

"My father would complete a full recitation of the Quran once a week."

This was done based on the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) to Abdullah bin Amar (رضي الله عنه):

"Complete the Quran within seven" Recorded by Al Bukhari

"Complete the Quran within seven" Recorded by Al Bukhari

It is also disliked that a person delays completion of the Quran beyond 40 days without a valid excuse. Imam Ahmed said:

"That which is have heard the most (from the people of knowledge) is that the Quran should be completed (at least) 40 days"

This is also because delaying completion of the Quran over 40 days will eventually lead to forgetfulness of the Quran and negligence of it and therefore it is prohibited to delay completion over 40 days if the fear of forgetfulness is present. Imam Ahmed mentioned:

"Several severe warnings have been transmitted concerning the one who memorizes and then forgets"

It is recorded in Sahih Al Bukhari, Sahih Muslim and other than them on the authority of Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah said:

"The example of the person who memorizes the Quran and preserves it by reciting it day and night is the example of a man who owns camels. If he ties them, they will stay, and if he doesn't, they will leave. This is the example of the person who memorizes the Quran."

Also on the authority of Ibn Masood (رضي الله عنه) who said that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

"What a grave (terrible) statement is that of a person who

says: I have forgotten verse such and such; in fact it (the verse) was removed from him. Practice the Quran, for verily it departs from the chests of men quicker than the untied camel."

Also on the authority of Abu Musa (رضي الله عنه) who said that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

"Safeguard the Quran; for I swear by the One Who my soul is in His hands, it (the Quran) moves quicker than a tied camel."

Ibn Kathir mentioned: This hadith consists of an encouragement to constantly recite the Quran, review it and preserve it, in order to prevent the person who has memorized from forgetting it, for indeed that is considered a tremendous fault. We ask Allah for His pardon.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL AZEEZ BIN AQEEL (FATAWA IBN AQEEL 2/478)

24. Is it permissible to read the books of an individual who is unknown and his methodology is likewise unknown, if these books are in matters of belief (Aqeedah) or Arabic grammar and religious sermons? Please give us a verdict, may Allah reward you.

Answer: These books that are read by a student contain abundant amounts of knowledge. The books of Aqeedah are the most important of them, and they comprise a

"Verily knowledge is religion, so be cautious who you take your religion from."

Consequently, these books (Aqeedah) and other than them, should not be read from except if the author is known for his knowledge, uprightness and correct Aqeedah. This is in order to trust his statements, that which he transmits and his mention of proofs.

The reader is either from the people of knowledge and therefore can distinguish between the correct speech and the incorrect speech. This individual (the scholar) is allowed to read the books of an unknown author except if the author is from the people of deviation or incorrect Aqeedah, the books authored by these individuals should never be read, not by a student of knowledge and more so not by other than him. This is because it is feared that these kinds of books will corrupt a person's religion and there is likewise no benefit in reading them except for the true, strong scholar who is able to refute that which is present in them, then there is no problem in him doing so.

As for the general layman, it is incumbent upon him to ask the people of knowledge concerning the beneficial books that he reads for rulings related to his religion. But as for Arabic grammar books as well as literature and other than that, it is not mandatory for the reader to know the author as long as the books are correct in those specific fields of knowledge.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN ABDULLAH AL SUBAYIL
(FATAWA WA RASAIL PG.496)

25. Sheikh Muhammed bin Saleh al Uthaymeen was asked concerning acting upon knowledge, he answered:

Answer: It is mandatory that a person who possess knowledge act upon it. If the individual doesn't, he will be from the first to be thrown into the hell-fire on the Day of Judgment. It is mentioned in lines of poetry:
The scholar who did not act upon his knowledge will be punished by the fire before the idol worshippers.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (KITAB AL 'ELM NUM.188)

26. If a person comes to a lecture late, what is more preferred, that he gives the greetings (salaam) upon entering the gathering, or is it better that he sits without greeting?

Answer: It is preferred that he does not give the greeting if this will cause an interruption in the lesson or cause a disturbance. But if it will not cause any interruption or disturbance, then giving the greeting is legislated upon every person that approaches a gathering, and due to this it is preferred to give the greeting. If a person does give the greeting then it is sufficient that only one person from those who are already in the gathering respond.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (FATAAWA ISLAMIYAA 1/175)

27. What would you advise an individual who has reached old age but desires to seek knowledge? Also, if it is not easy for him to learn from a scholar, would he still be able to seek knowledge without one?

Answer: We ask Allah to assist the person who Allah has blessed to turn in the direction of searching for knowledge, but (it should be mentioned) that seeking knowledge within itself is difficult. It requires a lot of dedication. Indeed we know, the older an individual becomes, the larger (physically or mentally) he becomes and the weaker his memorization becomes. Therefore, the individual that wishes to seek knowledge after reaching old age should choose a trustworthy scholar to study from.

Seeking knowledge by way of a scholar is easier and more convenient. The scholar is the example of an encyclopedia of knowledge, especially the one who possesses beneficial knowledge of Arabic grammar, Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh and other than these. Consequently, instead of having to read a book which contains 20 volumes, learning from a scholar would shorten the time it would take to learn from books. Learning from a scholar is also safer for the student. This is because, it is possible that he reads from a book whose author is upon a methodology other than that of the Salaf, weather this be with regards to deducting proofs or with regards to verdicts and rulings.

Therefore, we advise the man who has reached old age and would like to study, to cling to a trustworthy scholar

beneficial. The person who has reached old age should not despair nor should he say: I have reached old age. By doing so, he will hinder himself from obtaining knowledge. It was mentioned that a man (from the time of the Salaf) entered a masjid one day after Salat Al Thuhr and sat down. A person then said to him: Stand and pray 2 units of prayer (greeting of the masjid). Upon hearing this, the man stood and prayed 2 units as instructed. Sometime later on another day the same man entered the masjid after Salat Al Asr and began to pray 2 units of prayer before sitting. A person present in the masjid said to him: Do not pray now, this is a prohibited time for prayer. Upon hearing this, the man said: I must seek knowledge. He began to do so until he became an Imam (leaders) in knowledge. In this story, ignorance was the reason why this individual became knowledgeable, and if Allah knows that a person is sincere, He (Allah) will grant him success, and it is possible that he will be able to obtain much knowledge.

SHEIKH MUHAMMED BIN SALEH AL UTHAYMEEN (MEJMU' AL FATAAWA 26/204)

28. What is your opinion of the following statement which is common on the tongues of many students of knowledge: Whoever takes a book as his teacher, he will deviate from what is correct?

Answer: The statement which is well known is: Whoever takes a book as his teacher, his mistakes will supersede his accuracy. This is the statement that we know.
This statement is correct and it means, whoever did not

sit with the people of knowledge nor benefit from them, nor does he know the path that they treed in seeking knowledge, indeed his mistakes will be numerous and he will deviate from the truth. This is because he has lack of knowledge of the legislated proofs and the various established means of deduction that are used by the scholars.

As for his mistakes superseding his accuracy, this is debatable, but at any rate his errors are numerous do to the fact that he did not study with the people of knowledge nor did he benefit from them. He does not know the principles which they implement and therefore he faulters often. He is not able to distinguish between the truth and falsehood nor does he have knowledge of the printed books or the unprinted (older) books. It is possible that a printing mistake is present in a book, and because of his lack of knowledge, he thinks a specific matter to be correct and as a result he allows that which Allah has prohibited or he prohibits that which Allah has allowed.

This is done due to his lack of understanding. It is possible, for example, that it is mentioned in a book that something is not permissible, but in reality, this is a printing mistake and that particular thing is permissible and the word 'no' is really a printing error. This is a major mistake. It is likewise possible that a mistake takes place in a book pertaining to an action of worship stating: It is correct to do such and such an action. The correct statement should be: It is not correct to do such and such an action. This matter will not be noticed by this individual because he does not have understanding nor

does he possess knowledge, and therefore he is not able to distinguish mistakes present in books, and other than this.

SHEIKH ABDUL AZEEZ BIN BAAZ (MESULIYAT TALIBUL 'ELM PG. 41)

29. There is an individual who constantly sits at home and does not come out to gather with people. He does so for the purpose of seeking knowledge, memorizing the Quran and other books. Because of this, some brothers have admonished him and have called him: A man of the house. Is this action (of his) correct?

Answer: It is not sufficient that a student memorizes books. Rather, he should read these books to the scholars in order to learn the correct explanation. It is not correct for a student to memorize books without reading them with a scholar. This is one issue, another issue is the fact that he stays away from the people. It is not praiseworthy to totally distance oneself from the people. Instead, a student should sit in his home or in the masjid a portion of the day or night (to seek knowledge), but he should spend some time with the people at appropriate times and special occasions. He should spend time with them and if he has some knowledge that he can benefit them with he should remind them. Or they can read to him (Quran) and he can correct their recitation. Therefore, if his mixing with them brings about some benefit, it is recommended that he do so. He should divide his time between his studies and his family members and friends, especially in gatherings that contain benefit.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN AL FOWZAN (AUDIO

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN AL FOWZAN (AUDIO FATAAWA WWW.ALFAWZAN.WS)

30. May Allah give you much good. What are the factors that assist a person in seeking knowledge?

Answer: The elements that assist a person in seeking knowledge are many. From them, is that a person purifies his intention, making his learning sincerely for Allah. Sincerity is from the greatest elements that assist a person in obtaining knowledge. This is because, when an individual is sincere, this will allow him to gain support and help from Allah. Allah mentioned in the Quran:

{*Fear Allah and Allah will teach you*}

Therefore, it is mandatory that a person purifies his intention. Another beneficial element is that a person is diligent in attending lessons, and he should try his best not to miss any of them. He should attend the lessons from the beginning to the end in order not to miss any information. Third, he should ask about matters that are unclear to him. He should never ignore anything that is unclear from the lessons, but rather, he should inquire about it at the suitable time so that the affair becomes clear for him. Inquiring and discussing is from the elements that assist in seeking knowledge.

Also, asking about the different terms that may be misunderstood or misinterpreted from the various rulings. A student should not leave these matters unexplained if he does not know nor understand them.

with the teacher and asking him about issues that need explanation. Reviewing the materials before attending the lesson is likewise very important. A student should read and review the materials before attending the lessons. He should contemplate over the materials in order that he can recall the different issues that will be discussed. He should never attend the lesson while having no idea what will be taught. This type of person will not gain knowledge or benefit; instead he should read and review the materials so that he can point out what is unclear so that he will be able to ask about the matter once the teacher reaches that point in the lesson.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN AL FOWZAN (AUDIO FATAAWA WWW.ALFAWZAN.WS)

31. What is the ruling on recording lessons and seminars on video for the purpose of Islamic propagation and benefit?

Answer: Since the time of the Prophets the Islamic propagation has been established without the use of photography. Consequently, there is no need for photography and propagation takes place without it. It is not permissible to use that which is prohibited for the purpose of propagation.

SHEIKH SALEH BIN FOWZAN AL FOWZAN (AUDIO FATAAWA WWW.ALFAWZAN.WS)



APPENDIX-B

SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT ATTENDING SEMINAR/CONFERENCE

Time	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Fajr	Gather all information related to materials being taught. (Books, notebooks, pens, recorder, etc.)	1. Pray Fajr in congregation. 2. Perform morning supplications. 3. Sit in the Fajr lecture (short lecture)	1. Pray Fajr in congregation. 2. Perform morning supplications. 3. Sit in the Fajr lecture (short lecture)
4am	This time on Friday is usually not used for teaching.		
5am			
6am		Take a short rest	Take a short rest
7am			
8am		Breakfast	Breakfast
9am	Prepare for Jum'ah Prayer	1. Prepare notebooks, recording equip. 2. Review notes from previous lessons. 3. Try to get a place in the lecture hall close to the A/C. and close to the person giving the lesson.	1. Prepare notebooks, recording equip. 2. Review notes from previous lessons. 3. Try to get a place in the lecture hall close to the A/C. and close to the person giving the lesson.
10 am			
11am		Lessons/Lectures	1. Lessons/Lecture 2. After lessons are complete, a student should gather in small groups and perform 1 final revision before parting from the lecture hall. 3. If a student missed some information, he should photocopy or borrow his brother's notes so that he can copy them into his own notebook.
12pm			
1pm	Search for good companions who will also be attending the seminar.		
2pm	1. Prepare notebooks and title them according to lectures and materials being taught. 2. Prepare recording equipment. (Tapes, mp3, etc)		
3pm			
4pm			
5pm	Lectures usually begin around this time on Friday.	Lunch/Rest	1. Fill out the survey sheet distributed by the conference organizers. 2. Prepare for your journey home making necessary supplications and wishing your brothers and sisters a safe trip home.
6pm	Lessons/Lectures	Lessons/Lectures	1. Upon returning home it is recommended that a person write a short journal discussing some of the most important benefits received over the weekend. 2. Make a short honest honest evaluation of how you feel you could have obtained more and benefitted more from your time during the conference. 3. Thank Allah tremendously because by attending such an event, Allah will make your path easy to Jennah.
7pm			
8pm			
9pm			
10pm	1. After Salat review the information taught on this day. 2. Gather any questions that may arise during review. 3. Take a few minutes to read over materials that will be covered in the lessons on Saturday.	1. After Salat review the information taught on this day. 2. Gather any questions that may arise during review. 3. Take a few minutes to read over materials that will be covered in the lessons on Sunday.	

SUGGESTIONS FOR SEMINAR/CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

1. Make sure itinerary flyers are passed out early.
2. Make sure the audience is aware of what is being taught prior to the lectures/lessons.
3. Try to keep the timings according to what is mentioned on the program schedules.
4. Try to distribute photocopied study materials before the lessons.
5. Attempt to make 2 separate rooms for the females, 1 room for sisters with children, the other for sisters with no children.
6. Don't allow vending during lecture timings.
7. Announce all lectures 10 min. before the lecture begins, this will allow people to gather in the lecture hall early.
8. Encourage the brothers staying in the hotel to perform Salat in congregation, especially Salatul Fajr.
9. Don't hesitate to make necessary changes during the seminar if needed.
10. Distribute a feedback questionnaire on the last day of the conference in order to review the community's opinion and make necessary changes in the future.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE ATTENDING SEMINAR/CONFERENCE

1. Make your intention for attendance sincerely to benefit yourself in your religion.
2. Lower your gaze when walking through the halls and at all times. Indeed one of the elements that assist a student in his quest for knowledge is Taqwa.
3. Purchase all the materials needed (books, notebooks, pens, recorders, etc) before attending the conference.
4. Find a group of serious individuals to review with during breaks and at night.

5. Do not gather with others except that there is some religious benefit mentioned.
6. Try to sit close to the speaker; this is encouraged in the famous Hadith of Jibreel (as).
7. If you find yourself falling asleep during a lecture, change your sitting place.
8. Sisters with children should take turns taking care of each other's children. For example, 4 sisters (A, B, C, D) would like to attend the lessons but all of them have children. They should divide the lectures daily. Sister A takes all the kids for the first lesson while sister B, C and D attend. Sister B takes the children for the second lesson while sister A, C and D attend. If the sisters follow this method, insha Allah, all will benefit, and at night once the children are asleep, all the sisters can gather and share the missed notes. (Adjustments can be made to this suggestion to suit specific needs)
9. The student should review the information taught before going to sleep at night and in the morning. This will help a person to preserve what he heard during the day. It is noticed that many people spend the night chatting with their friends; this is a major hindrance in the path of the student of knowledge and is also a reason why a person finds it difficult to perform Salatul Fajr in congregation.
10. After the conference is over and a person returns home, it is important that for the next few days or weeks, the student reviews all of the knowledge taught. The notebook should not be placed on the bookshelf never to be touched until the following year. The only way a person truly benefits is when he reviews the past information efficiently.



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